



# SUPPLIER BUYER EXCHANGE

AN ONLINE NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN VIRGINIA'S GOVERNMENT PURCHASING PROCESS

## Welcome To Our First Issue

THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ASSISTANCE (DBA) is the Commonwealth agency focused on helping Virginia small businesses grow and prosper. One potential market sector for business growth is government contracting.

In response to demand from the Virginia business community, DBA has partnered with the Department of General Services (DGS) and the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) to help provide training and support to businesses interested in selling to the Commonwealth. DBA has established a new program, "Selling To The Commonwealth," designed to educate businesses about the purchasing process for Virginia government and facilitate more vendors to the contracting table.

This newsletter targets Virginia small businesses, Virginia government buyers,

both local and state, and other key partners, in an effort to create easier access to state government contracting for the Virginia business community. If you have received this newsletter from a friend, and would like to be added to our distribution list, email Loretta Vines, at [Loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov](mailto:Loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov) in the DBA Procurement Assistance office.

## WANT TO SELL TO THE COMMONWEALTH?

BUSINESSES INTERESTED IN SELLING TO VIRGINIA GOVERNMENT need to register on eVA, at [www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov). eVA registration consists of the creation of an online company profile, and the classification of your products and services according to a numeric system created by the National Institute for Governmental Purchasing (NIGP).

Virginia government buyers use NIGP codes to "shop" on the eVA system for a vendor that provides a certain product or service.

A DUNS number is required. This is a

unique number assigned to each physical ordering location. The number is free and can be acquired by visiting the Dun & Bradstreet website, at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com). It may take two to three weeks to obtain your DUNS number.

## VENDOR TRAINING

AS PART OF A NEW PROGRAM CALLED "SELLING TO THE COMMONWEALTH," DBA has taken a vendor training workshop on the road, traveling to eight cities in ten months. The workshop focuses on strategies for

vendor success and includes buyer-supplier networking sessions.

More events are planned for 2005.

For information on events in your area, see the DBA events calendar.

From the DBA home page, click "Events" on the primary navigation bar.

### WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Hampton

*"Great seminar."*

*"Excellent content."*

Fairfax

*"Very informative."*

Roanoke

*"Excellent presentation."*

Harrisonburg

*"I really learned a lot."*

*"Very straightforward"*

Danville

*"Very well done."*

## VENDOR SCOREBOARD

As of May 27, 2005 the Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) has certified **5,148** small, woman or minority owned (SWAM) businesses

As of March 31, 2005 **12.65%** of the Commonwealth's spending has been with DMBE certified SWAM firms

As of May 31, 2005 there were **27,631** firms registered with eVA at [www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov)

**3,802** eVA registered firms are DMBE certified



SUPPLIERBUYER EXCHANGE is a program of the Virginia Department of Business Assistance (DBA).

[www.dba.virginia.gov](http://www.dba.virginia.gov)

## Success Story

MONROE PATTERSON  
H & H MEDICAL SUPPLY, DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

### HARD WORK AND PERSISTENCE EQUAL SUCCESS

DANVILLE - "You're not going to get rich overnight," says Monroe Patterson, owner and founder of H & H Medical Supply, in regards to doing business with the Commonwealth. In fact, when it came to his strategy on competing for state contracts Patterson states, "I guess the squeaky wheel got the oil."

With that kind of tenacity, it is no wonder that Patterson, 56, and an African American business owner, has been in business with the Commonwealth for virtually two decades.

The idea for starting a business was spawned after Patterson underwent a job transfer in 1986. He decided to take his extensive knowledge of the medical supplies industry and start, H & H Medical Supply, a medical supplies, equipment, and safety materials distributor.

To make himself more marketable to the state, Patterson started by utilizing his available resources. To get a feel for the procedural process of Virginia procurement, he developed a relationship with former Sen. Paul Seward Tribble Jr., the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, and frequently visited the Department of General Services in Richmond.

However, being awarded a state contract is more than just registering on eVA and placing a bid. Patterson also took a proactive stance by attending procurement fairs and persistently following up on posted solicitations.

For others looking to effectively do business with the state, Patterson emphasizes that there are three processes all business owners absolutely cannot ignore: registering on eVA, accepting American Express to accommodate certain state agencies, and if the business meets qualifications, to obtain certification as a small, woman or minority owned business. Often smaller business owners are reluctant to accept American Express, discouraged by the 2½ percent processing fee the company takes from the sale.

*three processes  
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*registering on eVA,  
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### MAXIMIZE VENDOR SUCCESS

CONSIDER UPGRADING YOUR eVA service level from "Basic" to "Premium" to take advantage of "Push Technology."

"Premium" vendors receive electronic notification of solicitations over \$50,000 and Quick Quotes matched by their eVA account commodity codes. An advantage is that "Premium" vendors can never be "deselected" from a bidder's list.

- ▶ Make sure your eVA account solicitation address indicates your preference for email or fax notification. Do not select "US Mail". If you selected "electronic" as your "preferred order method" in eVA, then you must also register with ARIBA.
- ▶ Make sure you are registered on both the eVA and ARIBA systems.
- ▶ Make sure your primary email or fax contact information is up to date. Incorrect or out of date information on both eVA and ARIBA systems could be costing you missed opportunities and delayed notification of purchase orders.
- ▶ Make sure you have selected the proper NIGP commodity codes for your vendor profile. Appropriate NIGP commodity codes are critical for success. Buyers can use NIGP codes and to locate vendors for their desired purchases.
- ▶ Become DMBE certified.
- ▶ Become an American Express merchant.

### DBA WEBSITE OFFERS SUPPLIER ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

In the "Selling To The Commonwealth" section on the DBA website, businesses can review developing policy and key resources for information about becoming a supplier. Helpful vendor support materials can also be downloaded from this site.

Two "how-to" guides, "Selling To The Commonwealth" and "Learn What The State Spends," provide easy, step-by-step instructions for vendors who want to maximize their success as state government vendors.

### SUPPLIER FAQs

#### What is ARIBA?

ARIBA is the electronic purchase order management system buyers and suppliers use to communicate electronically with each other. If you select "electronic" as your "preferred order method" during your eVA registration, you will need to establish an ARIBA account. ARIBA transmits purchase orders and notifications to suppliers once the Commonwealth requests a relationship with the supplier. ARIBA then places the purchase orders in an inbox where suppliers can review and communicate a status such as

acknowledge or back order each item with comments that will then be available to the buyer with the purchase order.

#### What is the difference between eVA and ARIBA?

eVA is the account where suppliers manage solicitations and Quick Quotes, by email or fax. Your eVA account includes basic company information, and the commodity codes used to match to current solicitations. It is also where you set up your ordering address, including the fax number if you choose non-electronic as your "preferred order method" for receiving purchase orders.

## Spotlight on VDOT

THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (VDOT) IS THE STATE'S BIGGEST SPENDER, RESPONSIBLE FOR APPROXIMATELY 40% OF STATE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT.

General Agency Structure: VDOT is organized nine state districts: Bristol, Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Hampton Roads, Lynchburg, Northern Virginia, Richmond, Salem, and Staunton. Each of these districts has a chief procurement officer and procurement authority up to \$100,000.

Frequently purchased commodities/services include:

- ▶ Landscaping
- ▶ Mowing
- ▶ Seeding
- ▶ Tree Trimming
- ▶ Janitorial Services
- ▶ Street Sweeping
- ▶ Weed Eating

**VENDOR REQUIREMENTS:** All VDOT vendors must register on VDOT's Financial Management System (FMS) before providing work or services

to VDOT. This is in addition to eVA registration and DMBE certification.

If procurements exceed \$100,000 or if a statewide contract is to be established in excess of \$100,000, the purchase is handled by the Administrative Services Division at the VDOT Central Office in Richmond, at 1201 E. Broad Street, 23219, 804.786.3150, Mike Hall, Director of Procurement.

**VENDOR STRATEGY:** Make contact with the VDOT district office near you to make them aware of your availability. Also contact the procurement staff at the Central Office VDOT headquarters.

**STATE VERSUS FEDERAL:** Procurement for federally funded highway and construction projects is managed by a separate VDOT division. To find out about supplying federal construction related services to VDOT, contact VDOT Construction and Maintenance Contracting. Federal procurement programs, certification, and guidelines are based on US Department of Transportation policy and are managed separately from the state's SWAM initiative.

## Helping Your Vendors Navigate State Procurement

**ARE YOUR VENDORS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATE PROCUREMENT PROCESS?**

Use DBA as a resource and refer your suppliers to our Virginia Business Information Center (VBIC) for assistance. VBIC counselors are accessible toll free at 1.866.241.8814 or at vbic@dba.virginia.gov. Or refer them to the "Selling To The Commonwealth" section of the DBA website for helpful vendor support information.

### BUYER FAQs

*I have vendors who are eVA registered, but are not receiving my Quick Quote solicitation notices. Why is this?*

There can be several reasons for this. A common reason for difficulty receiving solicitation notices is the lack of a matching NIGP commodity code in the vendor's profile. An invalid email address or fax number in the vendor profile is another possibility. Also, the vendor's designated "Service Area" may not overlap with the buyer's choice of zone for selection of a bidder's list. A new type of email problem is that solicitations may be blocked or going to a JUNK mail folder.

*Can DBA assist me with my own supplier-buyer networking event?*

Yes. DBA can partner with you to bring the portable "Selling To The Commonwealth" workshop to your agency or locality. We can provide free marketing support, training materials, and help you target businesses in your area for a successful buyer-supplier exchange. For information, contact Loretta Vines at Loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov or 804.371.0357.

### VDOT REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES & CHIEF PROCUREMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

(up to \$100,000)

BRISTOL . . . . .	Gary Cole . . . . .	Gary.cole@vdot.virginia.gov
RICHMOND . . . . .	Robin Hines . . . . .	Robin.hines@vdot.virginia.gov
CULPEPER . . . . .	Mike Coffey . . . . .	Mike.coffey@vdot.virginia.gov
FREDERICKSBURG . . . . .	Myra Scheneman . . . . .	Myra.scheneman@vdot.virginia.gov
HAMPTON . . . . .	Dave Merinar . . . . .	Dave.merinar@vdot.virginia.gov
LYNCHBURG . . . . .	Joan Johnson . . . . .	Joan.johnson@vdot.virginia.gov
SALEM . . . . .	Roger Early . . . . .	Roger.early@vdot.virginia.gov
STAUNTON . . . . .	Wanda Welcher . . . . .	Wanda.welcher@vdot.virginia.gov
NORTHERN VIRGINIA . . . . .	Leslie Parnell . . . . .	Leslie.parnell@vdot.virginia.gov

**continued from page 2** Patterson also stresses that getting manufacturers to grant distributorships by developing partnerships is also another important component for getting large sales.

Patricia Mullins, director of procurement at Danville Community College, describes Patterson as, "an excellent, excellent vendor." Mullins first met Patterson twenty years ago while working at Southern Virginia Mental Health Institute. Mullins says that initial orders were small but it was Patterson's reliability and focus on customer service that eventually gave him preference as a vendor for larger orders, "You can pick up the phone and know he'll meet your needs."

The first order Patterson landed through the state was for a single customized wheelchair in Farmville. From that first wheelchair Patterson

himself hand-delivered, he now has contracts with institutions such as the Department of Health, Catawba Hospital, Langley Air Force Base, and the Department of Corrections, in addition to supplying private homes.

Although he acknowledges that more programs and assistance are needed for small business to compete, his goals are to increase state solicitations and ultimately work with the federal government to possibly land a billion-dollar contract.

Monroe Patterson lives and operates H & H Medical Supply out of Danville, where he also services the community by actively participating at Camp Grove Baptist Church and volunteering his time on the Board of Directors for the Danville Health Foundation Board, the Arts and Humanities Board, and local credit union.

## What does the state spend on...

**Commodity highlight:** Video Production (NIGP Code 91582)

### KEY CONTACTS FOR VIDEO PRODUCTION (91582)

TOP FIVE BUYERS WITH SPEND HISTORY  
JUNE 29, 2004 THRU JUNE 29, 2005

AGENCY	CONTACT	APPROXIMATE NIGP SPEND
Northern Virginia Community College	Nancy Stafford nstafford@nvcc.edu 703-323-3294	\$62,000
James Madison University	Jennifer Short wrennja@jmu.edu 540-568-4519	\$40,000
Danville Community College	Marie Lewis mlewis@dcc.vccs.edu 434-797-8453	\$30,000
Department of Correctional Education	Antonio Kornegay antonio.kornegay@dce.virginia.gov 804-225-3693	\$30,000
Department of Education	Gloria Murphy gloriamurphy@doe.virginia.gov	\$18,000
Assorted State Agencies with annual spend below \$18,000	Loretta Vines, DBA loretta.vines@dba.virginia.gov 804-371-0357	\$197,000
<b>Total spend for NIGP 91582</b>		<b>\$373,000</b>

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

### VBIC (VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER) - GENERAL PROCUREMENT ASSISTANCE

1-866-248-8814

[vbic@dba.virginia.gov](mailto:vbic@dba.virginia.gov)

### Department of Business Assistance (DBA)

"Selling To The Commonwealth"

[www.dba.virginia.gov](http://www.dba.virginia.gov)

### Department of Minority Business Enterprise (DMBE) - SWAM Certification

(Toll free in Virginia only)

1-800-223-0671

[www.dmb.virginia.gov](http://www.dmb.virginia.gov)

[dmb@dmbe.virginia.gov](mailto:dmb@dmbe.virginia.gov)

### eVA

[www.eva.virginia.gov](http://www.eva.virginia.gov)

Customer Care:

1-866-289-7367

Vendors:

[suppliers@cgi\\_ams.com](mailto:suppliers@cgi_ams.com)

Buyers:

[support@cgi\\_ams.com](mailto:support@cgi_ams.com)

### Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS #)

1-888-814-1435

[www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)

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